



College-Industry Innovation Fund

Stream 2: Research infrastructure associated with a Five-Year College and Community Innovation (CCI)¹ Innovation Enhancement (IE – competition 13) grant application

Call for proposals

Description

The CFI College-Industry Innovation Fund (CIIF) seeks innovative projects that will enhance the capacity of colleges to support business innovation in Canada by providing them with state-of-the art, industry-relevant research infrastructure to foster partnerships with the private sector in a specific area of institutional strategic priority.

The CFI, along with the federal funding agencies, recognize the need and opportunity to enhance the existing applied research and technology capacity in Canadian colleges, and to maximize its impact. As a result, the CFI is participating in the [CCI program](#) to foster partnerships between colleges and the private sector that will lead to business

¹ The College and Community Innovation (CCI) Program is managed by the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) in collaboration with the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC).

innovation locally, regionally and nationally. The federal funding agencies are coordinating their efforts and resources to maximize the impact of their funding, increase value for their deployed resources and streamline the application process for colleges, partners and investigators.

Under this joint initiative, Five-Year CCI-IE grant proposals submitted to NSERC can include a request for research infrastructure from the CFI's College-Industry Innovation Fund. However, the CIIF proposal must be submitted by a CFI-eligible college.

This is an opportunity for colleges to acquire infrastructure for their faculty to undertake the competitive and innovative applied research and technology development projects described in their CCI-IE proposal. The joint initiative aims to foster partnerships between colleges and the private sector, especially with small- and medium-sized enterprises, in order to increase business innovation. It allows colleges to apply for a comprehensive funding package that supports both research costs (through a CCI-IE grant) and research infrastructure (through CFI College-Industry Innovation Fund-stream 2) in a specific area of institutional strategic priority.

Since this initiative strives to enhance the existing applied research capacity at a college over a five-year period, colleges securing an entry-level CCI-IE grant are not eligible to receive CFI funding under this initiative.

Given that close collaboration between the college and private sector partners is essential to enabling business innovation, the level of involvement of private sector partners is a key consideration in the funding decisions. Colleges should focus on enhancing existing partnerships and stimulating new ones with a range of private sector partners. The CFI expects them to be actively engaged throughout the life of the research infrastructure project, including the application stage.

The fund aims to support partnerships between colleges and the private sector. In addition, participation from other sectors (e.g. public and non-profit), where appropriate, is encouraged as it broadens the impact of the proposal at the local, regional and national scale.

Eligibility

Eligible institutions

Only colleges eligible to receive CFI funding can apply to the College-Industry Innovation Fund. Those who have never been granted eligibility must provide the necessary documentation² no later than two months before the letter of intent deadline. Depending on the information initially provided, some of the colleges that are already eligible may be required to provide updated documentation by the same deadline. In order to facilitate the process and minimize their workload, all colleges who wish to apply should first contact the CFI at CIIF@innovation.ca to verify their eligibility status.

² Refer to section 3.1.1 of the CFI *Policy and program guide* for additional information on the documentation required.

To be eligible to apply for the College-Industry Innovation Fund, colleges must also provide the CFI with a summary of their most recent strategic research plan by the full application deadline. The CFI provides these summaries to committees for review purposes. Please refer to section 5.1.2 of the CFI *Policy and program guide* for additional information on the contents of the strategic research plan.

Eligible infrastructure

This fund is intended to support significant research infrastructure made up of a single item or a collection of items. Eligible infrastructure items include equipment, scientific collections, computer software, information databases and communication linkages used, or to be used, primarily for carrying on research. An eligible infrastructure project involves the modernization, acquisition or development of applied research or technology development infrastructure. Construction or renovations essential for housing the CFI infrastructure are also deemed eligible.

The infrastructure must be used to carry out applied research and technology development activities with eligible partners. The infrastructures can be used for training purposes only in cases where the training is articulated around an applied research or technology development project aimed at business innovation.

CFI-funded research infrastructure will represent a new capital asset and provide a new or improved applied research or technology development capability for the college.

To be considered eligible, in-kind contributions from external partners and cash expenditures by the institution must have taken place on or after April 1, 2015. Expenditures are considered incurred when goods are received, services have been rendered or work has been performed.

Please refer to section 4.6 of the CFI *Policy and program guide* for additional information on eligible costs.

Eligible infrastructure location

The infrastructure is normally located at an eligible institution. Infrastructure may be located outside an eligible institution when it can be shown that this is the most effective way to proceed, providing the eligible institution retains majority interest and exercises de facto control over the use of the infrastructure.

Funding

Colleges can submit a single proposal, requesting up to \$1.0 million from the CFI.

Applying its usual funding formula, the CFI funds up to 40 percent of the eligible costs of a project (subject to appropriation by Parliament in the year in which the funds are to be disbursed).

The CFI contributes to the operating and maintenance costs of approved proposals through its Infrastructure Operating Fund (IOF). The IOF allocation is equivalent to 30 percent of the total finalized CFI contribution. Please refer to section 4.7 of the CFI Policy and program guide for additional information on the IOF. Since the IOF is not intended to cover the entire cost of operating and maintaining the equipment, institutions must demonstrate that sufficient operating and maintenance resources will be available to capitalize on the full potential of the infrastructure over its useful life. The CFI will assess the adequacy of the medium- and long-term operating and maintenance plan as part of its review process.

Partner funding

Given that the CFI funds up to 40 percent of the infrastructure cost of a proposal, colleges are required to find financial partners willing to commit to the remaining 60 percent. The following partners are eligible to contribute to the infrastructure project:

- Institutional funds, trust funds or foundations
- Firms and corporations
- Departments and agencies of the federal government
- Departments and agencies of provincial, territorial and municipal governments
- Non-profit organizations
- Individuals

Only cash or in-kind contributions made to the eligible costs of a project are accepted as eligible partner contributions. For more information about eligible and ineligible cash and in-kind partner contributions, please refer to sections 4.8 and 4.9 of the CFI *Policy and program guide*.

Please note that funding from the federal research funding agencies (NSERC, SSHRC and CIHR), including CCI-IE funding, cannot be used to leverage CFI infrastructure funding. However, cash contributions from the private sector reported in a CCI-IE application can count as part of the 60 percent matching funds as long as they are made towards CFI-eligible infrastructure costs.

Application process

The application process involves the following:

Letter of intent

Colleges must submit the CCI-IE letter of intent as per the program guidelines (NSERC Form 186). If a college is planning to request CFI infrastructure along with CCI-IE funding, they must include a brief description of the applied research and technology development infrastructure to be requested (e.g. equipment, renovations, etc.) and the projected CFI amount requested in the CCI-IE letter of intent budget justification section. The CCI-IE letter of intent form must be submitted directly to NSERC.

Full application

Colleges invited to submit a CCI-IE full application form must complete an abbreviated CFI application form on CFI's website to request funding for infrastructure. Additionally, a paper copy must be sent directly to the CFI, postmarked by the deadline.

The full CFI application form includes a project module and a finance module. The project module describes the institutional commitment, the required infrastructure, the expertise to use the infrastructure, the plan for the sustainability and continuing relevance of the infrastructure, as well as the socio-economic benefits to the region and to Canada. In addition, some baseline information on appropriate performance measures related to the use of the infrastructure is required.

The CFI will forward the completed application form to NSERC, where it will be combined with the Five-Year CCI-IE full application for a joint review.

Timeline

	Letter of intent	Proposal	Decisions
CCI-IE Grants competition 13	May 29, 2015	October 30, 2015	March 2016

Review criteria

In accordance with the CCI-IE and the CIIF review criteria, proposals are judged in the context of the environment in which the college operates, including its available resources and opportunities, and the commitment of the college to undertake this initiative. Participation of private sector partners and contributions to business innovation is of primary importance.

To ensure that the fund objectives are met, letters of intent and full applications are assessed against the CCI-IE program selection criteria. Since some of the CIIF criteria are already covered by the CCI-IE criteria, the CFI infrastructure portion of the application only addresses the following criteria:

1. Contribute to business innovation
 - The infrastructure requested is crucial for maximizing the potential of private sector partnerships.
 - The proposed activities have the potential to lead to business innovation.
2. Enhance the applied research and technology development capacity of colleges
 - In the past, the college has provided significant support and shown substantial commitment to applied research and technology development in the area of strategic priority, and will continue to do so.
 - The college has developed a plan for the sustainability and continuing relevance of the research infrastructure.
 - The team demonstrates its ability to constantly remain up-to-date with respect to the current body of knowledge in the area and has the expertise to make effective use of the requested infrastructure.
3. Provide benefits to Canada
 - The activities proposed will lead to socio-economic benefits to the region and to Canada.

Review process

A joint review process has been developed between the CFI and NSERC to lessen the workload for applicants and reviewers. The CFI assesses the research infrastructure proposal for eligibility and completeness, and may request additional material.

The assessment of each full application will comprise two stages. Each application is first reviewed by experts in the area. The review reports are forwarded to the College and Community Innovation Review Committee, who then evaluates the CCI-IE proposal, as well as the infrastructure portion of the application according to CCI-IE and CIIF criteria. The CFI provides clarification, when necessary, to reviewers and committee members on CFI policies and procedures.

Funding decisions

NSERC makes the final decisions on the research support portion of CCI-IE proposals. The funding recommendations of the CCI Review Committee for the infrastructure portion of the application are presented to the CFI Board of Directors for their consideration and final decision. Colleges are informed of the decision shortly thereafter. Successful proposals are also listed on the CFI website. For each proposal, reviewer comments received during the joint CCI-CFI review process are made available to colleges by NSERC.

It is the responsibility of recipient colleges to submit the necessary documents to the CFI in order to finalize the contribution and establish payment schedules in accordance with CFI guidelines (see section 6.2 of the CFI Policy and program guide).

Public announcements

The CFI works closely with NSERC on funding announcements for infrastructure associated with CCI-IE grants. In most cases, announcements are organized in collaboration with a recipient institution. Public announcements provide institutions, their researchers and partners, along with government representatives, the media and the CFI, opportunities to highlight the applied research in their communities. Following each national CFI funding announcement, colleges are encouraged to work with local and national media to promote the benefits and impacts of this applied research to Canadians.

Reporting requirements

For the CFI-funded infrastructure project, colleges will be required to provide annual financial reports. In addition, they will have to submit periodic progress reports as per the CCI-IE schedule: after 18 months; after 36 months; and three months after the project end date (final progress report).

Reporting on performance measures related to research infrastructure will also be required as part of the regular CCI-IE progress reports.

Use and Disclosure of Personal Information Provided to the Joint Initiative

All personal information collected by the joint initiative related to researchers, company and college employees, community members and others is used to review applications and to administer and monitor awards. Applicants must comply with the [CCI program requirements](#) and with the [CFI policy](#) related to the Use and Disclosure of Personal Information. The three participating agencies (NSERC, SSHRC and CIHR) and the CFI share information among themselves as required to manage the CCI-IE program. By signing and submitting their CCI-IE and CIIF applications to CFI and NSERC, researchers agree to this use and disclosure of their personal information.